

Start Here

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HA-370

AND

HA-371

HA-370  
Old Alms House  
(County Poorhouse)  
Tollgate Road  
County

1857

The Old Alms House is a five bay wide, 3 ½-story (including basement level) stone mansion. Windows are 6/6 sash, and the central entrance (on the first true floor) contains a wide double door surrounded by an enclosed porch topped by a broken pediment. The double doors of the porch itself are flanked by 1/1 windows. Ten steps lead up to the porch, as the basement level is visible with two windows on either side of the porch steps. Two dormers with 6/6 sash windows pierce the front of the roof.

On February 4, 1831, a contract was signed by the Trustees of the Poor for use of the 256-acre farm south of Bel Air called the Alms House Farm. The structure known as the Old Alms House was constructed in 1857 by the Bond family. It was not until 1861 that a fee simple deed was obtained by the County Commissioners who had taken over the duties of the Trustees for the Poor. An overseer, appointed by the County Commissioners, continued to minister to Harford's homeless poor until 1962, when that 175-year old institution gave way to more modern methods of care of the aged and indigent poor.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

1303703507

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INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Alms House- Overseer's Quarters

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Toll Gate Road

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

☐ DISTRICT  
☒ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

☒ PUBLIC  
☐ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

☒ OCCUPIED  
☒ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

☐ YES: RESTRICTED  
☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

**PRESENT USE**

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM  
☐ COMMERCIAL ☒ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Harford County

Telephone #: 838-6000

STREET & NUMBER

45 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21014

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

40 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

HA 370,371

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

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This structure is located on the western side of Tollgate Road near the U.S. Route # 1 bypass overpass, and the building faces east. It has been abandoned for a number of years and has been boarded up. It consists of two sections; a brick two-story unit closest to the road and an adjoining two-story frame section on the first unit's southern extreme. The brick section has walls of Flemish bond and is three bays across and two deep. There are a pair of 2 X 2 attic lights, one on either side of the chimney, on either gable end of the section. The lower windows on the western side have brick arches over them. There were originally two doors, opposite each other (five panel), on the eastern and western elevations, with the western one having since been converted into a window. A belt course runs the length of the western facade, between the first and second level, although this may have been in actuality a support for a porch roof. The roof is gable flank and slate, with a soffit trim around it. The brick chimney on the gable ends were originally inside-ends, but the northern one was converted to an outside-end and the two tiers of windows were subsequently bricked over.

The southern wing is also two-story, with a low stone foundation, and is covered with shingles. It measures two bays by two, with doors on the eastern and western extremes. A small shed projects from the eastern facade near the northeast corner of the unit, and along the same side near the southeast corner is a small enclosed porch. The windows are 6 X 6 and are flanked by louvered shutters, and a pair of pentagonal vent-louvers are sited in the southern exposure between the bays of the first and the second levels. A closed-in porch encompasses the eastern entrance, and a cellar bay can be found on the southern embasure near the southeast corner. The roof is gable-flank and slate, and a small brick inside-end flue is positioned at the southern gable-end.

**CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY**

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1768, the Trustees for the Poor of each Maryland County were authorized to purchase and to maintain almshouses for the care of the indigent poor and vagrants. Harford was allowed in 1787 by the Levy Court to appropriate 50 acres for use as a poor farm, and seven trustees were appointed to carry this out. These were William Scott, Alexander Rigdon, Jesse Jarrett, Jacob Norris, Samuel Smith, George Patterson and Darrell Treadway, all of whom purchased 50 acres of Scott's Improvement, within Bel Air town limits. It was operated by the county until 1821, when the site now under discussion was acquired. The existing overseer's house dates from about the middle of the last century, while the long-since razed stone almshouse was built in 1857. It is interesting that this archaic facility was in operation as late as 1962.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Harford County Land Records

Martenet's Map of 1878

Wright, C. Milton; Our Harford Heritage, 1967, French Bray, Baltimore.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

256

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The building is located on the western side of Tollgate Road, about 0.3 miles ~~south~~ of the Route 1 overpass. It is bounded to the north by the Winters Run Golf Course and to the south and west by the Harford Equestrian Center and The Susquehanna Environmental Center.

**LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Paul L. Penrod/ site surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

October 21, 1976

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

267-1212

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438







HA 370

Old County Home Aug 70 JSE

HA-371

c. 1780

Aquila Scott House  
(Alms House Farmhouse or Overseer's House  
Tollgate Road  
County

Sloughed off for years as "the old farmhouse by the Poor Farm," this two-story brick structure is now valued as the home of Aquila Scott, arguably the father of Bel Air. Aquila and his ancestors had owned the land now crossed by Bond and Main Streets since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. By the time of the Revolution, thanks to the primitive agricultural practices of the time, the soil was played out and the tract was known as "Scott's Old Fields." (This was even noted in the 1795 *U.S. Gazetteer*: "In the vicinity of the town . . . the soil . . . is extremely thin.") When in 1782 it was time to choose a site for the new county seat, Harford's voters selected Scott's Old Fields. Aquila Scott subdivided the land, and Bel Air was laid out. The exact date of this house is not known, but the brick portion shows up in the 1798 tax list, which cites Aquila as owning 230 acres, six slaves, and a "36 x 22 2-story brick house." (There were also various outbuildings including a "shed," meathouse, and chicken house.) The exterior of the Scott house repeats certain elements seen down the road at Joshua's Meadows, including a three-bay façade, Flemish bond brickwork, a beltcourse, and a low service wing. (While Joshua's Meadows remains intact within and without, the Scott House, largely original without, acquired a center-hall plan in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.) Encouraged by architect James Wollon, AIA, in 1978, the county parks and recreation department rescued Scott's house from certain

demolition and adapted its rooms into offices, carefully keeping most of the surviving doors, chair rails, mantels, and other original trim.



HA371

County Home Farm house

See Aug 70

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